

**CURRENTLY PENDING CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-11: Canceled.

12. (Previously presented) An apparatus for initiating a handoff in a wireless communication system among a mobile station and a plurality of cells, the apparatus comprising:
- a processor configured to
  - transmit a first pilot strength measurement message from a mobile station to a base station;
  - assign a Walsh code channel for a first forward link dedicated control channel;
  - assign a Walsh function to the mobile station to provide early soft handoff capability to a first forward dedicated traffic channel; and
  - transmit a first message type (eghdm) from a base station to a mobile station containing information to start reception by the mobile station on the forward dedicated control channel of said first message;
  - and
  - a memory coupled to the processor for storing data.
13. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the processor is further configured to:
- convey a predetermined time interval to the mobile station within said first message type.
14. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the processor is further configured to:
- start a timer based on a time of reception of said first message type.

15. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the processor is further configured to:

increment the timer until its value exceeds a predetermined threshold ( $t_{dcch}$ );

measure a received pilot signal strength; and

add the associated pilot to an Active set for a forward dedicated control channel if said received pilot signal strength exceeds a predetermined (IS95B) threshold.

16. (Previously presented) An apparatus for initiating a handoff in a wireless communication system among a mobile station and a plurality of base stations, the apparatus comprising:

a processor configured to

transmit a first pilot strength measurement message from a mobile station to a base station to add a new pilot to its active set for a forward data control channel; and

optionally transmit at least one additional pilot strength measurement signal from the mobile station to the base station to add a pilot to its active set for a forward dedicated traffic channel.

17. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the processor is further configured to:

add a component to a first message (ESPM) and second message (GHDM) when a measured pilot strength in a predetermined group exceeds a calculated threshold.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein said predetermined group is one of neighbor set and remaining set.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the measured pilot strength satisfies:

$$10 \times \log_{10} PS > \max\left(\frac{SOFT\_SLOPE}{8} \times 10 \times \log_{10} \sum_{i \in A} PS_i + \frac{ADD\_INTERCEPT\_dcch}{2}, \frac{T\_ADD}{2}\right)$$

wherein the summation is performed over all pilots in an active set, and SOFT\_SLOPE and ADD\_INTERCEPT are base station configurable parameters.

20. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the processor is further configured to:

convey a predetermined time interval to the mobile station within said first message type.

21. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the processor is further configured to:

start a timer based on a time of reception of said first message type.

22. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the processor is further configured to:

increment the timer until its value exceeds a predetermined threshold ( $t_{dcch}$ );

measure a received pilot signal strength; and

add the associated pilot to an Active set for a forward dedicated control channel if said received pilot signal strength exceeds a predetermined (IS95B) threshold.